San Antonio Express-News

ExpressNews.com and mySA.com | Monday, November 6, 2017 | The voice of South Texas since 1865

TIME FOR WORSHIP TURNS TO HORROR

Shooting suspect Devin P.Kelley

THE SCENE: Gunman attacks church in tiny Sutherland Springs

THE CARNAGE: 26 killed, at least 20 hurt; the gunman later dies

THE MOTIVE: It's unclear, but gunman wore black tactical gear

Photos by Edward A. Ornelas / San Antonio Express-News

People attend a candlelight vigil for the shooting at the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs. The rampage is the deadliest shooting in modern Texas history.

By Caleb Downs, Sig Christenson and John MacCormack
STAFF WRITERS

SUTHERLAND SPRINGS — When a tranquil small town worship service erupted in deadly gunfire Sunday morning, the largest mass shooting in modern Texas history quickly claimed 27 lives and left at least another 20 injured, some critically.

It occurred shortly after 11 a.m. when a man dressed in black tactical gear, wearing a ballistic vest and bearing an assault rifle attacked the First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs, shooting first from the outside and then again after entering the worship hall.

After being shot at by a local person armed with a rifle, he dropped his weapon and sped away, authorities said.

The dead ranging in age from 5 to 72, reportedly included small children, a pregnant woman and the daughter of the church pastor who was out of town.

Investigators work the scene of the slaughter at the First Baptist Church.

"From what I heard, someone just walked in and started shooting," said Amanda Mosel, whose 13-year-old goddaughter was among the slain.

With tears in her eyes, the 34-year-old stood outside the Sutherland Springs Community Building where residents gathered following the shooting.

"There's maybe 50 of us. It's a small tight-knit church," said Mosel, who "sadly" didn't attend church this Sunday.

The shooting suspect, identified by two law enforcement sources as Devin Patrick Kelley, 26, of New Braunfels, was killed about 5 miles away in Guadalupe County when he crashed his vehicle while attempting to escape.

Little could be learned Sunday about Kelley, who was kicked out of the Air

Worship continues on A8

THE SUSPECT

Violent incident led to ouster from AF

By John Tedesco, Guillermo Contreras and Sig Christenson
STAFF WRITERS

Although he hasn't been publicly identified, law enforcement sources said Sunday that the man who opened fire on a Sutherland Springs Baptist church is a 26-year-old former Air Force airman who was discharged after he assaulted his wife and child.

Devin Patrick Kelley was court-martialed and convicted of domestic violence in 2012 at Holloman AFB in Alamogordo, New Mexico, where he was a logistics readiness specialist, Air Force spokeswoman Ann Stefanek said.

Kelley was sentenced to 12 months confinement and given a bad conduct discharge, Stefanek said.

Kelley unsuccessfully appealed his conviction in 2014 with the U.S. State Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces.

Calls to Kelley's rela-

Violent continues on A10

DESPERATE PURSUIT

Two men gave chase in wake of rampage

By Alexandro Luna and Kelsey Bradshaw
STAFF WRITERS

LA VERNIA — As emergency responders rushed into Sutherland Springs following the deadliest shooting in modern Texas history, two men were headed the opposite direction — chasing after the gunman.

The pair took on the man who authorities say shot and killed 26 people at the the First Baptist Church as he tried to flee.

William Luther / Express-News

John Langendorff happened upon the scene.

"It had to be done," John Langendorff told the San Antonio Ex-

Chase continues on A10

RESIDENTS' REACTIONS

Grief now resides in small community

By Silvia Foster-Frau
STAFF WRITER

SUTHERLAND SPRINGS — As Michael Ward pulled bloodied and broken people from the First Baptist Church on Sunday, he frantically searched for his family members: a nephew, three nieces and his sister-in-law.

"My nephew was outside with four bullets in him," he said of Rylind Ward, 5, who he said got shot four times.

"And Rhianna, the bullet broke her glasses, and broke 'em off, and she said she hid underneath the pew and didn't get hit," he said of his 9-year-old niece, his voice wavering before he cleared his throat.

Grief has pummeled the small community of Sutherland Springs after a gunman believed to be Devin Patrick Kelley of New Braunfels killed at least 26 people at its downtown church.

The highway leading to the town, U.S. 87, is dotted

Grief continues on A9

THE GREAT ANCIRA CAR PAYOFF
Celebrating 45 Years
Someone EVERYDAY will have one month's car payment made! Plus ONE lucky winner will have their ENTIRE CAR LOAN PAID OFF!
Ancira Made My Car Payment!! They Can Make Yours Too!
ANCIRA
Ford NISSAN CHEVROLET GMC KIA CHRYSLER BUICK DODGE RAM Jeep

153rd year, No. 37, 36 pages
© 2017 San Antonio Express-News